

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

Food and
Nutrition
Service

Program Aid No. 1351

WCB WCB
Make Your Food
Dollars Count:
A Project Guide



MAR 13 1975

U.S. DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE
NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL LIBRARY

Acknowledgments

The development and production of the materials for the MAKE YOUR FOOD DOLLARS COUNT, PART II project involved the cooperative efforts of many agencies and individuals in the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the State Cooperative Extension Service in New York and Florida, and State and local Food Stamp offices in Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia, and New Jersey. Appreciation is expressed to all of those people who worked conscientiously to review and comment on the project's materials during various stages of development.

Recognition is also given to the Cooperative Extension Service in the States of Florida, Massachusetts, and Michigan for supplying Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) materials that provided many of the original ideas for illustrations in pamphlets that are the core of this whole project.

This is an equal opportunity program. If you believe you have been discriminated against because of race, color, national origin, sex, age, handicap, religious creed, or political beliefs, write immediately to the Secretary of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250

July 1984

Contents

Introduction	
Objectives	2
Methods	2
How To Use Project Materials in the Food Stamp Office	
Displaying the Posters	3
Distributing the Pamphlets	3
Showing the Slide-Tape Presentation	4
How to Coordinate Project Activities with Community Organizations ..	4
Workshop Ideas for Community Organizations	5
Organizing Workshops	5
Conducting Workshops	5
Topic 1: Plan Ahead To Make Your Food Dollars Count	5
Topic 2: How Do You Find the Best Meat Buys?	6
Topic 3: Which Brand Is the Best Buy?	7
Topic 4: Convenience Foods Can Save Time But Can Cost More	8
Topic 5: Do You Use Food Labels To Make Smart Choices?	9
Topic 6: Do You Use Unit Prices To Find the Best Buys?	9
Where To Go For More Nutrition and Shopping Information	
Local and State Sources	11
National Sources	12
Appendices	
Questions and Answers on MAKE YOUR FOOD DOLLARS COUNT Topics ..	14
Food Stamp Coupon Book Nutrition Messages	17
MAKE YOUR FOOD DOLLARS COUNT Evaluation Form	19

Introduction

Objectives

The Food Stamp Program aims to improve nutrition for low-income families. Food stamps expand low-income families' food buying power. Yet, food stamp recipients still face the challenge of getting a nutritious diet at low cost. They need basic shopping skills and knowledge of nutrition to meet this challenge.

MAKE YOUR FOOD DOLLARS COUNT is a project sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It is designed to provide food stamp recipients with information on basic shopping skills and nutrition to help them make the best use of their food dollars.

Toward this objective, the project encourages local food stamp offices to conduct MAKE YOUR FOOD DOLLARS COUNT activities and to coordinate these activities with community groups that help support the needs of low-income populations.

Methods

A variety of print and audiovisual materials are available for your use in carrying out MAKE YOUR FOOD DOLLARS COUNT activities. They are:

- **Make Your Food Dollars Count Kit—Each kit contains:**
 - 1) A Project Guide—This guide gives suggestions for using project materials in local food stamp offices and for coordinating activities with community organizations. It also suggests where to go for more nutrition and shopping information. The guide's appendices contain MAKE YOUR FOOD DOLLARS COUNT concepts in question-and-answer format and include the MAKE YOUR FOOD DOLLARS COUNT messages on the Food Stamp Program food coupon books.
 - 2) Pamphlets—Four pamphlets for food stamp recipients emphasize two project themes, "Buy Better" and "Eat Better." Topics include basic nutrition, selecting nutritious snacks, approaches to meal planning and shopping strategies, buying meats, comparing product brands, choosing convenience foods, and using unit pricing and food labels. Spanish versions of these pamphlets are also available.
 - 3) Posters—Two colorful posters for display in the food stamp office reinforce the project themes of "Buy Better" and "Eat Better."

USDA is mailing MAKE YOUR FOOD DOLLARS COUNT kits to local food stamp certification offices, State food stamp offices, State Cooperative Extension Service offices, and Food and Nutrition Service field offices.

- **Slide/Audio Cassette Tape Presentation ("Buy Better to Eat Better")**—This 80-frame, 12-minute slide show portrays three shoppers who learn about and apply shopping skills. The food buying and nutrition messages reinforce those in the pamphlets. Certification offices can use this audiovisual tool in waiting rooms or in other settings. USDA is mailing copies of this

slide show to State food stamp offices, State Cooperative Extension Service offices, and Food and Nutrition Service field offices and regional offices. Local food stamp offices can order a free copy of the slide show from the Office of Public Information, Food and Nutrition Service, USDA (address on page 12). Community groups can borrow it from the local food stamp office to use in conducting workshops with food stamp recipients.

- **Radio Public Service Announcements (PSA's)**—Six 30-second PSA's with a musical jingle give food buying tips. USDA is mailing these PSA sets to about 7,600 radio stations nationwide. All six of the PSA's are in English; two are available in Spanish.
- **Food Coupon Messages**—The back covers of the Food Stamp Program food coupon books have messages that reinforce those in the pamphlets. These messages are in this guide's appendix on p. 17.

How To Use Project Materials in the Food Stamp Office

It is a good idea to assign someone in the office to be responsible for the materials. You can use them in many ways. Here are a few ideas for you to think about.

Displaying the Posters

Display the posters on any wall in the certification office where you know clients will have an opportunity to read the messages as well as see the pictures. You may want to display them in the waiting room near the reception desk or next to the snack area. Or you may ask someone (such as a cooperative extension home economist or a local high school or college home economics teacher) to make a table display using the posters and other related materials. This display could be set up next to the wall in the reception or snack areas.

Distributing the Pamphlets

Displays

If you have a table display for the posters, the pamphlets can be arranged on the same table to create more interest for people as they walk by. Volunteers can hand out the pamphlets to people in the waiting room, and perhaps answer their questions about them. If the receptionist has time, he or she may also want to answer questions people may have. A question and answer section in the appendix of this guide on page 14 is provided to assist in answering common questions. The receptionist can refer those people with more difficult questions to a local nutrition resource person.

**Showing the Slide-Tape
Presentation
("Buy Better to
Eat Better")**

Direct Mail

If you are mailing food stamp ATP cards or other information to recipients, you can include a different pamphlet with each mailing.

Showing the slide-tape presentation will require a slide projector and a cassette tape player. An automatic continuous playing type with the slide projector and tape player in one unit is best. This makes it easier to show the presentation, since it does not have to be reset each time. If this type of unit is not available, perhaps a volunteer could operate the equipment and answer any questions.

With either type of equipment, the best location for the slide-tape show is probably in the waiting room. However, any convenient location will do. An ideal place might be next to the poster and pamphlet display. But remember that the equipment needs to be near the person who will monitor or reset it.

**How To Coordinate the Project Activities With
Community Organizations**

Many people in the community may have an interest in the MAKE YOUR FOOD DOLLARS COUNT activities and want to get involved. Some of these people may be staff from community service organizations, home economists from the local Cooperative Extension Service office, high school or college home economics teachers, local health department nutritionists, and volunteers such as retired people, homemakers, and students. Ask them to help!

How do you find them? One way is to contact your county Cooperative Extension Service office or county health department. They will be able to tell you who may be interested and available to work with you. County social service agencies and local high schools and colleges are also good places to contact for names of home economics teachers and students who can help. Remember, you need to allow enough lead time for volunteers to coordinate this activity with their other plans. A good way to bypass this problem is to make agreements with other agencies to provide services on a regular basis.

What can staffs from community service organizations and volunteers do? First, they can help plan activities for the MAKE YOUR FOOD DOLLARS COUNT project. They can also help set up the materials and make an attractive display. Cooperative Extension Service home economists, home economics teachers, and nutritionists can provide other materials such as recipes, games, and puzzles on nutrition and economical food buying. They can also conduct workshops on economical food buying, either in the certification office waiting room or at another community location where food

stamp recipients are present. Volunteers can help by showing the slide-tape presentation, handing out the pamphlets, and answering questions that recipients may have about the materials.

Workshop Ideas For Community Organizations

Organizing Workshops

With interest and a little preparation, community groups or volunteers can organize workshops to cover the topics discussed later in this guide. The basic ingredients are a suitable location (large enough, comfortable, and relatively quiet), a receptive audience, a lesson plan, some stimulating activities, and an enthusiastic leader. For example, a workshop might be conducted in the quietest corner of the waiting room of a certification office. An ideal length for a session is about 15 to 20 minutes.

Some points to keep in mind when giving a lesson:

1. State clearly the topic for the lesson.
2. Tell the audience the purpose of the lesson, and how it may be useful to them.
3. Go over the main points of the lesson and put them in the proper order of importance.
4. Involve the audience in the lesson activities and ask questions as you go along.
5. Summarize the main points of the lesson at the end and find out whether the audience understands them. Ask the audience how they will use the information in the lesson the next time they go shopping.

Conducting Workshops

There are a number of possible activities for a workshop. Here are some suggestions based on the MAKE YOUR FOOD DOLLARS COUNT pamphlets.

Topic 1: Plan Ahead To Make Your Food Dollars Count

Plan ahead so your family can get the variety of foods and nutrients they need each day. Planning ahead at home saves time at the store and may save you money.

Tips from Pamphlet:

1. Think about meals and snacks your family likes. Plan a *menu* for a week or more. Budget your money so it will last for your planned menus throughout the month.
2. Plan to use *leftovers* and foods you already have at home.
3. Make a *list* of the foods and amounts you need.

4. Check newspapers to find *specials* and cents-off coupons that can make meals cost less.
5. Use cents-off *coupons* if:
 - you need the food in your meal plans and
 - the price is less than other brands of the same food.

Ideas for Workshop Leader:

1. Prepare a menu sheet with space to write down the foods for each meal for a week, plus snacks. Write down the foods for one day as an example and leave the other spaces blank. Give the menu sheet to the participants and ask them to fill in the blank menu items, according to their family's food preferences.
2. Prepare a shopping list sheet with space to write down foods in these categories: fresh fruits and vegetables; canned foods; breads, cereals, and grains; dairy products; meats; frozen foods; and condiments. Give a copy of the shopping list to each participant in the group. Ask each person to write down the exact foods and the amounts he or she will need to buy to prepare the meals on the menu sheet. After all participants have completed the shopping list, ask them to think of the foods they have on hand at home and cross those foods off the list.
3. Collect a variety of food coupons from the most recent newspapers and magazines. (Watch for the expiration date on the coupons.) Before the workshop, go to a local market and try to find those items on the coupons. Write down the prices of the foods in the market, as well as the prices of the same items of a different brand (include store or generic brands, if possible). For the workshop, give each person one coupon and have him or her try to guess the market price of the item using the coupon. Then compare participants' guesses with the prices for the same products you found in the store. In cases where another brand has a lower price, ask participants to try to explain why.

Topic 2: How Do You Find the Best Meat Buys?

Some meats cost less than others. You can compare packages of different kinds of meat to find the best buy each week.

Tips from Pamphlet:

1. Look at the package of meat. Decide the number of meals for your family you can get from it.
2. Look at the package price. Then, divide the number of meals into the total price of the package of meat. This gives you the meal cost.
3. Compare the cost of a meal for different types and cuts of meat to find the best buy.

4. Nutrition is in the lean part; with more bone and fat you get more waste and fewer servings of meat.

Ideas for Workshop Leader:

1. Show or tell the group how to figure the number of meals you can expect to get from different cuts of meat. On a large sheet of paper, show how to figure the price per meal for a package of meat (divide the total package cost by the number of meals). Then pass out one index card to each person. The index card should have the total cost of a package of meat and the number of meals it can provide. Ask each person to figure the price of a meal for the meat.
2. Before the workshop, find some pictures of different types and cuts of meat (from magazines or other sources). At one or more food stores, estimate the cost for one meal for these meats. During the workshop, show the pictures and ask the participants to estimate the number of meals each type or cut of meat could provide. Ask them to tell which of the meats are the best buys (the kind of meats with the lowest cost for a meal). Talk about the reasons for their choices.

Topic 3: Which Brand Is the Best Buy?

Low-cost brands can help stretch your food dollar.

Tips from Pamphlet:

1. There is not a big difference in the nutrients found in foods that have a nationally advertised brand, the store brand, or no brand at all on the label.
2. You pay extra for the advertising and fancy packaging in the price of food.
3. Taste, color, appearance, and size of pieces may be a little different from brand to brand.

Ideas for Workshop Leader:

1. Collect package labels from several different types of food. For each food type, collect a label from a generic brand, a store brand, and a name brand. Pass out the labels during the workshop, one to each participant. Ask the three people with the same type of food to compare the nutrition information on their labels. Have each group of three tell the other participants whether there were any differences in the foods and describe what they were.
2. Collect packages of different foods. For each type of food, make sure you have a generic brand, a store brand, and a name brand. During the workshop, give each participant one package of food and a slip of paper. Ask each person to write on the paper the type of food, the price, and the type of brand. Collect the slips of paper. On a larger sheet of paper, write down the prices for each type and brand of food. Ask participants to tell why generic and store brands may be less expensive than name brands.

3. Before the workshop, buy one can of fruit or vegetables with a generic brand, a store brand, and a name brand label. Mark the bottom of each of three empty containers with a letter A, B, or C and write down which type of brand each one represents. Put the food from that brand in the container. Also mark a letter A, B, or C on the bottom of several paper or plastic cups. During the workshop, put a small amount of the food from each container in a cup with the same letter as the large container. Then give one cup to each person and ask him or her to sample the food in it. Ask participants to guess which container has the generic brand, the store brand, and the name brand labels. Talk about the results and why there may be differences. Also, ask participants if they can think of some ways to use foods that may not be uniform in size, color, or taste.

Topic 4: Convenience Foods Can Save Time But Can Cost More

Many convenience foods cost more than the same foods you make at home.

Tips from Pamphlet:

1. The things that add to the cost of convenience foods are: packaging, preparation, and added ingredients, such as seasonings and sauces.
2. You should compare the cost of convenience foods you like with similar foods you make at home. Then decide if convenience is worth the extra cost.
3. Usually, the more that is done to foods by someone else, the more you pay.
4. You can make your own convenience foods by planning meals to have leftovers to eat later in the week.

Ideas for Workshop Leader:

1. Before the workshop, collect several packages or containers of convenience foods. Write down the price of each, then cover it on the package. During the workshop, pass the food packages around to all the participants and have the group guess the price of the food. Compare the group price to the actual price for each food. Ask the participants to tell why they think the costs are higher for some convenience foods than for others. Mention that packaging, preparation, and added ingredients such as seasonings and sauces help to determine the cost of convenience foods.
2. Ask participants to name the types of convenience foods they use most often. Write down each type of food on a large sheet of paper for everyone to see. When each participant has finished naming the foods, ask the group to tell whether they think each food would be a high-cost or low-cost convenience food. Write down the answer opposite the food on the paper. Talk about the reasons why participants think some foods are high cost and others are low cost. Include examples of other high-cost and low-cost convenience foods not mentioned by the group. Examples of high-cost

Topic 5: Do You Use Food Labels To Make Smart Choices?

convenience foods are frozen vegetables in fancy sauces and store-bought frozen dinners. Examples of low-cost convenience foods are plain frozen vegetables and frozen dinners made at home from leftovers.

Food labels can tell you a lot about the product inside.

Tips from Pamphlet:

1. The *Nutrition Information* on the label tells you the amount of calories, protein, fat, carbohydrate, vitamins, and minerals in one serving; it also tells you the number of servings you get in the container and the size of a serving.
2. The *Ingredient Listing* tells you the ingredients found in the product. They are listed in order from the most to the least amount.
3. The *Dates* stamped on the product label tell you when foods are the freshest. Even after the last day of sale, there is time for home storage and use.
4. The *Package Weight* lets you compare containers of different sizes to see which one has more of the product inside.

Ideas for Workshop Leader:

1. Cut out the ingredient listings from a variety of food labels. Put a number on the back of each and write down the product name on a separate sheet of paper. Give one listing to each participant in the group. See how many people can identify the product from the ingredient listing. Alternatively, give the names of food products to some people and the ingredient listings to others. Have them find their “partners.” Talk about the various ingredients listed on the product labels and why they were added (for example, to prevent spoilage, improve consistency in texture or color, enhance flavor, increase sweetness, etc.). Mention that the ingredients are listed in order from the most to the least amount found in the product.
2. Collect a variety of food containers from meat, fish, egg, and dairy products. Give one container to each participant in the group. Ask each person to tell what is the last date that product should be bought and why. Explain that the “Sell by” and “Best when purchased by” dates give you some time for home storage and use. The “Do not use after” date warns you that the food should not be used after that date.

Topic 6: Do You Use Unit Prices To Find the Best Buys?

They help you compare the cost of equal amounts of a food for different brands and container sizes to find the best buys.

Tips from Pamphlet:

1. The unit price is the price of a given amount of food—pound, ounce, quart, cup, etc.

2. Unit prices help you to:
 - pick the low-cost *package* or *container size*
 - find the *brand* that costs less
3. Stickers showing the unit price are usually on the grocery shelf below the food.
4. Unit price stickers may look different in every food store, but they tell you the same thing:
 - the name of the food
 - how much the total package costs you
 - the weight of the package or size of the container
 - the unit price

Ideas for Workshop Leader:

1. Before the workshop, go to several local stores and write down the information as it appears on several unit price stickers. Then put this information on index cards. During the workshop, give one index card to each participant. Ask each person to write on the card where to find the name of the food, the weight of the package or size of the container, how much the total package costs, and the unit price. Ask each person to give his or her card to another person in the group, and compare responses. Talk about any differences and answer questions from participants.
2. Before the workshop, collect packages or containers for different sizes and different brands of the same food product. Write down the unit price information for each food container on a sheet of paper. During the workshop, give each person one package or container of food. Ask each person to pair up with another person having a different size or brand of the same food product. Then have each pair try to guess what the unit prices are for their packages or containers, based on the price and the weight of the package or size of container. Have them write the unit price down on a sheet of paper. When each pair has finished, compare their unit prices to the ones you wrote down at the store. Talk about the results and answer any questions participants may have.

Where To Go For More Nutrition and Shopping Information

As you plan and conduct MAKE YOUR FOOD DOLLARS COUNT activities, you may want to consult with community groups that specialize in home economics or nutrition. These groups may be able to help you organize workshops and answer questions on shopping and nutrition. They may also have materials that complement the MAKE YOUR FOOD DOLLARS COUNT materials.

Local and State Sources

Federal, State, and Local Government

The government services described below are possible sources for nutrition information and offices to which you might refer families who receive food stamps. You might check with some of these agencies for permission to post their names and phone numbers in the waiting room for food stamp recipients to contact for more information. You might also include a local listing of the voluntary health organizations described in this section.

Cooperative Extension Service—Your county Cooperative Extension Service may be able to help with your MAKE YOUR FOOD DOLLARS COUNT project. Extension Service agents provide community education on food purchasing, food preservation and preparation, and general nutrition. Some counties also operate the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP). With the use of paraprofessional aides, EFNEP teaches low-income families how to establish healthy diets from available food resources.

Health Department—Your local health department may have public health nutritionists on staff who can help you with your project. Also, health departments that operate the Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) employ nutritionists who specialize in maternal and child nutrition.

Nutrition Program for the Elderly—Your State or local agency on aging may have food and nutrition information that is directed specifically to the needs of the elderly.

Nutrition Education and Training (NET) Program—The NET Program coordinator, who is usually located in your State department of education, is a resource for nutrition information for preschool and school-age children.

Voluntary Health Organizations

Voluntary health organizations are also sources of nutrition information and offices to which you might refer families who apply for food stamps. Organizations such as the American Red Cross may offer nutrition education programs for the general public. Other voluntary health organizations such as the American Heart Association, American Cancer Society, American Diabetes Association, and March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation offer educational programs on diet as it relates to a specific health condition or disease. Contact your local or State affiliate of these organizations for a list of their publications and description of their services.

Educational Institutions

You may want to contact high school home economics teachers in your community for shopping and nutrition information. Other possible contacts are junior college and university programs in home economics, human nutrition, and health.

Professional Associations

Nutrition information for consumers is available on a variety of topics from professional associations. Refer to *National Sources* in this section for the addresses of national offices of some of these associations. These professional associations may have affiliate organizations in your State or community.

National Sources

Federal Government

Office of Public Information

Food and Nutrition Service, USDA
3101 Park Center Drive, Room 823
Alexandria, Virginia 22302

State and local food stamp offices can order quantities of two nutrition publications free of charge from the above address. *Building a Better Diet* (PA-1241) is a full-color booklet with pictures that describes five food groups and the major nutrients in each. *Eating for Better Health* (PA-1290) is a two-color booklet with drawings that includes nutrition information together with nutritious, low-cost menus and recipes.

Consumer Information Center

General Services Administration
Department CA
Pueblo, Colorado 81009

Write to the above address for their catalog of government publications that includes pamphlets on food and nutrition. Single copies of some publications are free.

Office of Consumer Affairs

Food and Drug Administration
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
5600 Fishers Lane, HFE-88
Rockville, Maryland 20857

This office distributes government publications on the topics of nutrition, food additives, food labeling, food safety and storage, weight control, and food faddism. You can order up to 200 copies of a publication free of charge.

Food and Nutrition Information Center (FNIC)

National Agricultural Library, USDA
Room 304
Beltsville, Maryland 20705

The FNIC houses a large collection of materials from government and non-government sources on food, nutrition, and nutrition education topics. State food stamp offices can borrow print and audiovisual materials from their collection free of charge.

Professional Associations

You may want to write to these professional associations for a list of their nutrition publications and for the addresses of their State and local affiliate organizations.

American Home Economics Association

2010 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

American Dietetic Association

430 N. Michigan Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60611

Society for Nutrition Education

1736 Franklin Street
Oakland, California 94612

American Medical Association

Department of Foods and Nutrition
535 N. Dearborn Street
Chicago, Illinois 60610

American Academy of Pediatrics

P.O. Box 1034
Evanston, Illinois 60204

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

600 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Suite 300-E
Washington, D.C. 20024

American Dental Association

211 E. Chicago Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60611

Appendices

Questions and Answers on MAKE YOUR FOOD DOLLARS COUNT Topics

Food stamp recipients may have questions after reading or viewing MAKE YOUR FOOD DOLLARS COUNT materials. To help volunteers and the staffs of local food stamp offices and community groups respond to some of their questions, the major concepts of the MAKE YOUR FOOD DOLLARS COUNT project are presented below in question and answer form.

Eat a Variety of Foods

Q. Why?

A. No one food has all the essential nutrients in the amounts that you need. So, you should eat many different kinds of foods to help assure an adequate diet. The greater the variety, the less likely you are to develop either a deficiency or an excess of any single nutrient.

Q. How?

A. One way to assure variety and, with it, a well-balanced diet is to select foods each day from each of the major food groups: Vegetables and fruits; enriched and whole-grain bread, cereal, rice, and pasta; milk and milk products; and dry beans, peanut butter, eggs, fish, poultry, and meat. Also, it is important to select a variety of foods within each food group.

Choose snack foods that are high in nutrients

Q. How?

A. Choose snacks from any of the major food groups or combine foods from different food groups. In choosing snacks, avoid those that have too much sugar, fat, and salt. Too many of these snacks can lead to poor nutrition and poor health.

Plan ahead to make your food dollars count

Q. What can I do at home to save money on groceries?

A. Plan meals for a week or more considering foods your family likes and leftovers and other foods you already have at home. Make a list of the foods and amounts you need and check newspapers for specials and coupons on these foods. Plan to be flexible in case you find less costly foods that can be substituted. Budget your money so it will last for your planned meals throughout the month.

Q. Can I use cents-off food coupons when I purchase food with food stamps?

A. Yes. The Food Stamp Program allows the use of cents-off food coupons but some grocery stores may not be aware of this.

Q. Do cents-off coupons always save money at the store?

A. Not always. Use coupons if you need the food and if the price is less than other brands of the same food.

Q. What can I do at the store to save money on groceries?

A. When you shop, try to shop alone and take your time. Stick to your shopping list unless you can substitute in-store specials or other foods which may be lower in cost. Try not to shop when you are hungry. Also, try not to be attracted by foods with colorful, fancy packaging or by foods that may not be good buys.

Compare the cost and number of meals from different packages of meat to find the best buy

Q. When choosing meats, how can I find the best buy?

A. First look at the package and decide on the number of meals for your family you can get from it. Remember that nutrition is in the lean part, so that with more bone and fat you get fewer meals. Divide the number of meals into the total package price. The package with the lowest cost for one meal is your best buy.

Buy the lowest cost brands that suit your family's taste and the meals you have planned

Q. Why do different brands of the same food differ in cost?

A. You usually pay more for a brand of food that is widely advertised and has fancy packaging. You also may pay more for a particular brand because of a special seasoning, color, or consistency in size of pieces. Remember, though, the nutrients you get from different brands of the same food are about the same.

Q. When is the seasoning, color, or consistency in the size of pieces of food of a particular brand least important?

A. These characteristics are least important when a food is used in combination dishes such as casseroles, stews, soups, and salads.

Store-bought convenience foods often cost more than if you made these foods at home

Q. Why?

A. Usually, the more done to foods by someone else, the more you pay. Packaging, preparation of food, and adding ingredients such as seasonings all add to the cost of convenience foods. Some store-bought convenience foods may be high in fat or salt. Making your own with less fat or salt could turn out to be healthier as well as cheaper.

Q. What are some ways to cut down costs without losing convenience?

A. Make your own convenience foods. For instance, plan your meals to have leftovers to serve another day. At the store, compare the costs of similar convenience foods to get the best buy.

**Use unit pricing when
you shop to save money**

Q. What is unit pricing?

A. Unit pricing takes the arithmetic out of comparing prices. It gives the price of a food for a unit of measure such as weight (e.g., ounce), volume (e.g., quart), or count (e.g., number in package).

Q. How can unit pricing save me money?

A. It helps you pick the lowest cost package size or brand of a food.

Q. Where can I find unit pricing?

A. In stores that use unit pricing, stickers showing the unit price are usually on the grocery shelf below the food. Unit pricing stickers may look different in every food store, but they tell you the same thing.

**Use food labels to
make smart food
choices**

Q. What do nutrition labels tell me?

A. The nutrition label tells you the amount of calories, protein, fat, carbohydrate, vitamins, and minerals in one serving. It also tells you the number of servings you get in a container and the size of a serving.

Q. Why should I read the listing of ingredients on food products?

A. The ingredient list tells you what is in a product. Also, since ingredients are listed in order from the most to the least amount in a product, looking at the first ingredients on the listing tells you what ingredients you are getting the most of.

Q. Why should I look at the dates printed on food products?

A. They give you an idea of how fresh a food is. If a "Sell by" and "Best when purchased by" date on the container is the day you buy the food or before, the food will be good even though you store and use the food a little later. The "Do not use after" date warns you that the food should not be used after that date. Foods with a label date of any kind that is past are not of peak quality.

Q. Do larger packages always hold more food?

A. No. A large package may hold less food than a smaller package. Look for and compare the weights of the packages to see which holds more.

Food Stamp Coupon Book Nutrition Messages

The messages printed on the back covers of the Food Stamp Program food coupon books emphasize the two themes of "Buy Better" and "Eat Better."

\$ Make Your Food Dollars Count \$

(\$65 book)

Can You Find the Best Buy?

You can find which container size or brand of food is the best buy by comparing UNIT PRICES:

Brand A		Brand B	
You Pay	Amount You Get	You Pay	Amount You Get
85¢	1 Quart	65¢	1 Pint
	UNIT PRICE 85¢ per quart		UNIT PRICE \$1.30 per quart

BEST BUY ↑

Look For Unit Price Labels on the Shelf!

\$ Make Your Food Dollars Count \$

(\$50 book)

Which Snacks Are Good Buys?

Snack foods can be expensive—get your money's worth. Choose snacks wisely for better nutrition.

- Crackers, Bread, Toast
- Milk
- Fruit Juice
- Popcorn, Cereal
- Fresh Fruit
- Fresh Vegetables

Avoid Too Much Fat, Salt, and Sugar When Selecting Snacks!

\$ Make Your Food Dollars Count \$ (\$40 book)

Do You Know That Protein is in Meat and Other Foods as Well?

Meats are known for the protein and other nutrients they supply. Other foods, which sometimes cost less, also have these nutrients.

Try these protein foods *more often* • DRY BEANS
 • DRY PEAS
 • PEANUT BUTTER
 • EGGS

For Economy and Variety Buy Both Meat and Nonmeat Protein Foods!

\$ Make Your Food Dollars Count \$ (\$10 book)

Do You Buy Foods in Plain or Fancy Packages?

Try the economy brands. Often they are in plainer packages. The food inside has the same nutrients, but may cost less than brand name foods.

Compare: Economy Brandsto..... Name Brands

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plainer Package • Lower Price • Good Nutrition | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fancy Package • Higher Price • Good Nutrition |
|--|---|

Compare Package, Price, and Product!

\$ Make Your Food Dollars Count \$ (\$7 book)

How Do You Find the Best Meat Buys?

For meats your family likes...

- Decide how many meals you can get from a package. The more bone and fat, the fewer servings of *lean* meat.
- Find the cost of meat for a meal:

$$\begin{array}{r} \$1.00 \text{ cost per meal} \\ 2 \text{ meals} \overline{) \$2.00 \text{ cost of package}} \end{array}$$

Compare the Cost Per Meal for Different Meats!

MAKE YOUR FOOD DOLLARS COUNT Evaluation Form

We would like to invite your comments on the **Make Your Food Dollars Count** project. They will help us develop materials that are truly useful. Please mail your completed questionnaire to:

Make Your Food Dollars Count

Nutrition and Technical Services Division, Rm. 609
Food and Nutrition Service, USDA
3101 Park Center Drive
Alexandria, VA 22302

1. How useful are the materials in the **Make Your Food Dollars Count** kit?
(circle one response for each type of material)

	Very Useful	Useful	Not Useful
Project Guide	3	2	1
Pamphlets	3	2	1
Posters	3	2	1

Specific comments: _____

2. Have you reviewed the slide show entitled, "**Buy Better to Eat Better**"?

Yes _____ No _____

If yes, how useful is this slide show for teaching food stamp recipients?

Very Useful	Useful	Not Useful
3	2	1

Specific comments: _____

3. How feasible is it to show a slide-tape presentation in a local food stamp office waiting room?

Very
Feasible

Somewhat
Feasible

Not
Feasible

3

2

1

Specific comments: _____

4. Is it feasible to hold **Make Your Food Dollars Count** “workshops” in the waiting rooms of local food stamp offices?

Yes _____ No _____

Specific comments: _____

5. In your area, are staff from community organizations and volunteers willing to help conduct **Make Your Food Dollars Count** workshops for food stamp recipients?

Yes _____ No _____

If yes, what community groups and volunteers are willing to help? _____

6. Additional comments on the MAKE YOUR FOOD DOLLARS COUNT project:

7. Please identify your work affiliation.

_____ Local Food Stamp Office (Title) _____

_____ State Food Stamp Office (Title) _____

_____ Other (Organization and Title) _____

Thank you for your help!

